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Economic and Social Council

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Agenda item 10
Regional cooperation

Morocco and Spain: draft resolution

Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1982/57 of 30 July 1982, 1983/62 of 29 July 1983, 1984/75 of 27 July 1984, 1985/70 of 26 July 1985, 1987/69 of 8 July 1987, 1989/119 of 28 July 1989, 1991/74 of 26 July 1991, 1993/60 of 30 July 1993, 1995/48 of 27 July 1995, 1997/48 of 22 July 1997, 1999/37 of 28 July 1999, 2001/29 of 26 July 2001, 2003/52 of 24 July 2003, 2005/34 of 26 July 2005, 2007/16 of 26 July 2007 and 2009/11 of 28 July 2009,

Referring to resolution 912 (1989), adopted on 1 February 1989 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,[1] regarding measures to encourage the construction of a major traffic artery in south-western Europe and to study thoroughly the possibility of a fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar,

Referring also to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, held in Barcelona, Spain, in November 1995, and to the work programme annexed thereto, aimed at connecting the Mediterranean transport networks to the trans-European network in order to ensure their interoperability,

Referring further to European Commission communication IP/07/119 of 31 January 2007 on strengthening transport cooperation with neighbouring countries, established on the basis of the conclusions of the report of November 2005 of the High-level Group on the Extension of the Major Trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries and Regions, and to the conclusions of the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 15 December 2005, as well as to the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region 2007-2013,

[1] See Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, fortieth ordinary session (third part), 30 January-3 February 1989, *Texts adopted by the Assembly*, Strasbourg, France, 1989.

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Referring to the final declaration of the ministerial conference of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, held in Marseille, France, in November 2008, and the emphasis placed on transport projects in the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of July 2008,

Referring also to the meeting held in Luxembourg on 8 June 2008 between the Ministers of Transport of Morocco and Spain and the Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport with regard to the official presentation to the European institutions of the project for a fixed link,

Taking note of the follow-up report prepared jointly by the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/11,[2]

Noting the conclusions of the studies carried out by the Western Mediterranean Transport Group on Europe-Maghreb transport and cooperation agreements and on transport conditions for nationals of Maghreb origin when they travel to the Western Mediterranean in the summer, and the action plan for the period 2009-2011, adopted at the sixth meeting, held in Rome on 20 May 2009,

Noting also the conclusions of the studies carried out by the European Commission (InfraMed, MEDA TEN-T, REG-MED and DESTIN) for the development of an integrated transport network in the Mediterranean basin,

Taking note of the Regional Transport Action Plan adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, held in Brussels on 29 and 30 May 2007, which constitutes a road map for intensifying cooperation in the Mediterranean with regard to infrastructure planning and the reform of transport service regulations, as well as the list of priority projects annexed thereto, including the fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar,

Taking note also of the conclusions of the global evaluation of the project, carried out in 2010 by an independent consortium of international consultants, which indicate that the geostrategic component of the project and the potential for the development of mass-transit networks offered by long-distance rail transportation weigh significantly in favour of its implementation and the involvement of the international community, especially regarding its financing,

1. *Welcomes* the cooperation on the project on the link through the Strait of Gibraltar among the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Governments of Morocco and Spain and specialized international organizations;

2. *Also welcomes* the progress made in the project studies as a result, in particular, of deep-sea drilling, which has given a decisive impetus to geological and geotechnical exploration and to the technical, economic and traffic update studies currently being finalized;

3. *Further welcomes* the organization by the International Tunnelling Association, under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa, of the seminar held in Madrid in January 2005 on soundings and treatments: new developments relating to geological formations;

[2] See E/2011/21.

4. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa for the work done in preparing the project follow-up report requested by the Council in its resolution 2009/11;[2]

5. *Renews* its invitation to the competent organizations of the United Nations system and to specialized governmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in the studies and work on the fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Europe to continue to take an active part in the follow-up to the project and to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2013 on the progress made on the project studies;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide formal support and, to the extent that priorities permit, the resources necessary, from within the regular budget, to the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa, to enable them to carry out the activities mentioned above.